

INTRODUCTION OF VETERANS' ACCESS TO EMERGENCY CARE ACT OF 1999

HON. LANE EVANS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to assure that all veterans enrolled in VA health care will receive coverage for emergency care services delivered both in and outside of VA facilities.

Currently, most veterans lack access to reimbursement for such care unless the emergency occurs on VA grounds.

Many VA medical centers don't routinely offer emergency services and those that do lack an emergency room that is open twenty-four hours a day. Compounding the problem is the fact that most VA medical centers are further from their patients' places of residence than other community providers.

If a veteran receives emergency room care from a non-VA provider, he or she is denied reimbursement even if a trip to the nearest VA hospital would be life threatening.

Last year the President asked all federal agencies to identify where they were deficient in complying with the Patient Bill of Rights. The VA determined it needed legislation to reimburse veterans for emergency care it didn't provide. While being encouraged to view VA as their managed care provider, veterans could risk financial ruin if VA failed to comply with the same emergency care reimbursement standards applied to private-sector managed health care providers.

Even before veterans began enrolling last year for VA care, VA's responsibility for reimbursing veterans for the cost of emergency health care services was confusing. VA would provide emergency care to only those veterans who were either already at VA when the emergency occurred or to those veterans who were able to physically present themselves at a VA facility before receiving required emergency care from a non-VA provider.

VA's physical "tag up" requirement creates confusion for the majority of veterans who are not on grounds during an emergency. Too often in crisis situations, veterans lack the time to resolve who will pay for their care before seeking treatment.

This situation is likely to become even more confusing as VA begins to market itself as a managed care provider featuring enrollment, a basic benefits package and a new primary care focus—characteristics commonly associated with Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs). Most HMOs reimburse enrollees for pre-authorized emergency care. The pending legislation would give VA the authority to reimburse emergency care delivered by any provider if veterans had no other coverage for such care.

Many veterans are literally "banking on" VA either furnishing or reimbursing their care for any condition in an emergency. Too many veterans and their families have been financially devastated because they assume VA will be there for them in a health crisis. I believe veterans should be able to count on VA in an emergency.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

I am encouraged by the recent recommendation by a coalition of veterans service organizations, the Independent Budget group, to add funds to the FY 2000 VA Medical Care budget in order to provide emergency care to veterans. I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor and support this important legislation.

HONORING RABBI IRWIN GOLDENBERG FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. WILLIAM F. GOODLING

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Rabbi Irwin Goldenberg for his generous service to the community. For twenty-five years, Rabbi Goldenberg has served both his congregation at Temple Beth Israel and the community of York, Pennsylvania as a revered leader, teacher, and father.

In times of sorrow and in times of celebration, Rabbi Goldenberg has demonstrated a strong commitment to his congregation. He has always been there to provide loving support and strong leadership to people of his Temple. Rabbi Goldenberg has long served as the official voice for the Jewish community in York, establishing a sturdy link between his congregation and the community at large. To this day, he has remained very active in his faith serving on the central Conference of American Rabbis, the American Jewish Congress, the Philadelphia Board of Rabbis, and the Association of Reformed Zionists to highlight just a few of his many efforts.

One of the greatest aspects of this man is that his kind efforts are not simply confined within the Jewish community. Rather, his works extend far beyond his Temple and into the community at large. Rabbi Goldenberg's gracious outreach into the community has been consistent for over twenty-five years. He relishes his role as teacher and friend to troubled young people. He lends his time to countless charities and organizations, and has been showered with accolades including "Educator of the Year" and "Man of the Year."

And, despite the extraordinary constraints on his time, Rabbi Goldenberg has always remained lovingly committed to his family. The proud father of two exceptional young ladies, one of which is studying Judaism in Israel, Rabbi Goldenberg is an example to fathers everywhere. Recently, the Rabbi and his lovely wife Joyce celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary. Their loving devotion to each other and their family is the premier model of what marriage should be.

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Rabbi Irwin Goldenberg for twenty-five years of dedicated and selfless service to the congregation at Temple Beth Israel, the Jewish community, and the people of York, Pennsylvania.

January 6, 1999

ARTICLES OF IMPEACHMENT

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, it is not my preference or custom to speak on matters relating to the misconduct of others who hold public office. I have never done so before during my time in Congress. I hope never to have to do so again.

But the Constitution confides in Members of this House the obligation to decide whether high officers have acted in a manner that requires their impeachment. Where an official has a legal or moral obligation to judge misconduct and when that obligation cannot honorably be avoided, it is necessary to stand without flinching for what is clearly right.

Those failing to do so become inevitably part of the wrong against which they failed to act. The issue before the House is not whether Bill Clinton has acted with integrity. We all know the answer to that question. The issue is whether we have the integrity to do our duty under the Constitution and laws.

Public men and women commit private wrongs, just like everyone else. And just like everyone else, they are usually called to account for those wrongs in the fullness of time. If they act honorably when called to account, and accept responsibility for what they have done, they can emerge with a measure of their integrity intact. If they act less than honorably and refuse to own up to their actions, they may, and often are judged by the voters.

Their fellow officers in government have no warrant to judge them formally if they at least conform to the minimum standards of law and morality in how they react. But the minimum standards are just that: the minimum that we have the right to expect and insist upon. No one can fall below those standards with impunity. No officer of government can actively subvert the law, abuse the powers of his office and flout the standards of decency without facing the consequences that any other person in a position of trust would have to face.

That is the gravamen of the charges against President Clinton. The genesis of this matter was the President's liaison with Monica Lewinsky. But that affair, however sordid, was a private wrong. The Articles of Impeachment deal exclusively with what the President did to avoid the consequences when that private wrong reached the eyes and ears of the public. When the President was called to account before the people, he lied to the people; when he was called to account before a civil deposition, he lied under oath; and then, to cover up those initial lies, he tampered with witnesses, abused the trust of other officers of government, perjured himself before a federal grand jury, and abused the powers of the Presidency to avert investigations into his wrong doing.

From the record before the House, it is impossible to conclude anything other than that the President is guilty of these wrongs. He is therefore, in my judgment unfit to hold any position of trust, much less the Presidency.

I do not blame anyone for wishing somehow to avoid impeachment. It is a terrible thing to have to participate in the shipwreck of a person's reputation and public career, and it is